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Message Text

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10
ACTION EA-14

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02 INR-10 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-15 USIA-12

AID-20 OMB-01 RSR-01 /101 W
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R 280516 Z JUN 73
FM AMEMBASSY SAIGON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3833
INFO USDEL JEC PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SAIGON 11629

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT THIEU VISITS MR I

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM RECEIVED FROM AMCONSUL DANANG JUNE 27 TH,
1973 REPEATED FOR YOUR INFO.
QUOTE:
C O N F I D E N T I A L DANANG 790

E. O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP
SUBJECT: PRESIDENT THIEU VISITS MR I

1. PRESIDENT THIEU HAS JUST CONCLUDED A TWO- DAY VISIT
TO MR I. HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY MINSTATE DR. DAN, MINSOCIAL
WELFARE DR. PHIEU, AND SPECIAL ASSISTANT LTGEN KHANG. THE
PRESIDENT ARRIVED EARLY JUNE 26 AT HUE, WAS BRIEFED AT I
CORPS FORWARD HQ, AND THEN VISITED THE 1 ST DIV (AT FSB T- BONE),
AN AIRBORNE DIV BRIGADE HQ AT MY CHANH AND MARINE HQ AT HAI
LANG DISTRICT HQ. ALTHOUGH THE THRUST OF HIS VISITS WAS
UNDERSTANDABLY THE CURRENT MILITARY AND CEASEFIRE SITUATION,
THE PRESIDENT ALSO SPENT THE BETTER PART OF THE AFTERNOON
TOURING THE HAI LANG RETURN- TO- VILLAGE PROJECT AND VISITING
RECENTLY- RETURNED FAMILIES THERE. THIS WAS HIS FIRST VISIT TO
THE PROJECT. HE DID NOT STOP IN QUANG TRI CITY.
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2. THE MILITARY BRIEFINGS WERE STANDARD FRIENDLY/ ENEMY SITUATION PRESENTATIONS WITH A PARTICULAR VIEW TOWARDS THE RECENT REALIGNMENT OF RVNAF AREAS OF OPERATION NORTH OF THE HAI VAN. THERE WAS CONSIDERABLE EMPHASIS UPON THE ENEMY BUILDUP IN THE WESTERN TWO- THIRDS OF THE REGION. THE PRESIDENT SEEMED AWARE OF THE DIMENSIONS OF " THE OTHER MR I." HE WAS ALSO BRIEFED THOROUGHLY ON GVN EFFORTS SINCE THE CEASEFIRE IN THE ARIZONA TERRITORY, GO NOI ISLAND, TIEN PHUOC DISTRICT (QUANG TIN), THE BATANGAN PENINSULA AND MO DUC/ DUC PHO/ NGHIA HANH/ DISTRICTS OF QUANG NGAI PROVINCE. RED ACETATE PATCHES COVERING THE ABOVE AREAS ON THE MAPS WERE CEREMONIOUSLY STRIPPED OFF DURING THE BRIEFING, INDICATING FIRM REACQUISITION BY THE GVN SINCE CEASEFIRE. THERE WAS ALSO AN INTERESTING EMPHASIS DURING SEVERAL BRIEFINGS ON THE GVN' S ROAD- BUILDING PROGRAM IN THE WESTERN DISTRICT VALLEYS IN QUANG NAM, QUANG TIN AND QUANG NGAI THROUGH ZONES WHICH ARE GENERALLY CONTESTED. (THIS SUBJECT HAS PERHAPS NOT RECEIVED ADEQUATE ATTENTION IN OUR REPORTING.) THE PRESIDENT OBSERVED THAT DESPITE THE BUILDUP IN THE WEST, THE COMMUNISTS IN HIS OPINION WOULD NOT BE READY TO LAUNCH A MAJOR OFFENSIVE IN MR I BEFORE RAINY SEASON (WHICH STARTS IN SEPTEMBER) AND THAT THEY COULD NOT SUPPORT SUCH AN OFFENSIVE DURING RAINY SEASON FROM THE LAOS ROAD SYSTEM ALONE.

3. THE PRESIDENT APPEARED TO FOCUS FOR THE FIRST TIME ON THE PROPOSED PLAN TO ESTABLISH A " NEW QUANG TRI CITY" AT A POINT TEN KMS SOUTH OF THE PRESENT DEVASTATED SITE. THERE WAS LIVELY DISCUSSION OF THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE GVN APPARENTLY ABANDONING THE TRADITIONAL SEAT OF GOVERNMENT FOR THE PROVINCE. HIS REACTION TO A PROVINCE REQUEST FOR A SLICE OF THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT PERSONNEL RESOURCES (" DECENTRALIZATION") WAS ALSO INTERESTING. THE PRESIDENT STATED, IN EFFECT, THAT THE QUANG TRI REBUILDING PROGRAM WOULD HAVE TO BE CARRIED OUT BY LOCAL PEOPLE AND THAT THE LOCALS SHOULD HAVE NO ILLUSIONS THAT BUREAUCRATS FROM SAIGON WOULD REBUILD THEIR PROVINCE FOR THEM.

4. THE MORNING OF JUNE 27 WAS SPENT TRAVELING BY RAILWAY FROM THE LAN CO BRIDGE, JUST NORTH OF THE HAI VAN PASS,
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TO DANANG, ON WHAT IS FAST BECOMING ONE OF MR I' S MOST POPULAR JOURNEYS. THE PRESIDENT MENTIONED THAT THIS WAS HIS FIRST RAILWAY TRIP SINCE 1951 , WHEN HE TRAVELED FROM SAIGON TO DALAT. THE PRESIDENT TOURED THE DANANG DEVELOP-MENT AGENCY PROJECTS AT MID- MORNING AND GOT A GOOD PERSONAL EXPOSURE TO A LARGE CHUNK OF THE CITY' S POPULACE. BRIEFINGS AND AWARDS CEREMONIES AND LUNCH AT THE ARVN 3 D DIV HQ

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WERE FOLLOWED BY 1400- HR DEPARTURE FOR BINH DINH PROVINCE.

5. IT IS PERHAPS WORTH MENTIONING IN THE CONTEXT OF OUR RECENT CONCERN OF AMERICANS BEING CUT OUT OF THE INFORMATION FLOW TO NOTE THAT I WAS INVITED BY CORPS COMMANDER LTG TRUONG TO TAKE PART IN THE ENTIRE PROGRAM FOR THE PRESIDENT AND SAT IN ON ALL BRIEFINGS, PLUS A SMALL LUNCHEON WITH ONLY RANKING GENERALS AND MINISTERS PRESENT. I WAS THE ONLY FOREIGNER PRESENT THROUGHOUT THE PROGRAM, AND THE PRESIDENT (AS WELL AS THE MR I LEADERSHIP) SEEMED QUITE OPEN IN THEIR DISCUSSIONS ON ALL ASPECTS OF THE MILITARY SITUATION HERE. THE PRESIDENT EXUDED CONFIDENCE AND HIGH SPIRITS THROUGHOUT HIS CROWDED SCHEDULE.
BROWN
UNQUOTE WHITEHOUSE

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